

## Evaluation: Discipline

No one wants to think about having to discipline or fire a volunteer, but a good volunteer manager is prepared if the situation should arise. The impact and possibility of a volunteer relationship coming to this stage can be greatly reduced when the proper orientation and training steps are taken.

Proper disciplinary procedures:

- Act ethically and compassionately
- Act quickly
- Document every step – verbal warnings should be documented in the volunteer's personnel file.
- Clarify that this is a disciplinary action. Cite the policy, procedure or work rule they have violated.
- Clarify what has been unacceptable – clearly define what 'unacceptable' means.
- Listen to the volunteer's perspective
- Don't fall into the trap of accusing them or hearing excuses
- Clarify if this disciplinary action may lead to their dismissal
- Establish a time frame for improvement
- Follow through

It's important through the disciplinary process to express your confidence in the volunteer's ability to comply with the policy or procedure in question. Disciplinary action is a warning. It is not for immediate termination.

If disciplinary action does not provide satisfactory results, it may be necessary to terminate the volunteer's association with your agency. But before this step, consider the three "Re's"

**Re-Assign** – Would the volunteer work better in another area of your organization?

**Re-Train** – In some situations, sending the volunteer through the orientation and training process may be in order.

**Re-Vitalize** – Perhaps the volunteer is 'burnt out' and could use a much-needed vacation from their duties, with the opportunity to return refreshed.

Disciplining a volunteer need not be considered a difficult and foreboding task. Remember, you're helping them remain an important and viable person on your staff – their association with your organization needs to be as productive for you as it can be for them.

## A Volunteer Management Tip From:



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